



THE EXPRO EXPERIENCE

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CHANGING SPACES

While the chaos of the pandemic reverberates across the shopping center world, building owners are trying to comply with a moving target of new regulations. As a result, a property's lighting is more important than ever.

- Improved Security
- Enhanced Aesthetics
- Personal Wellness



Source: freshairoc.com/safety



Source: visitlagunabeach.com



Sources: dailymail.co.uk & gettyimages.com

THREE REASONS TO RE-EVALUATE YOUR LIGHTING

We could all use a reprieve from the news headlines. So how do we brighten our outlook? We redesign and brighten our spaces!

These spaces are now a lot more outdoorsy - and ironically public, considering the new dangers *posed* by that same public. Restaurants have moved their seating onto patios and into parking lots in order to keep their customers safe. Shopping centers are reworking individual parking spaces into drive-up order pickup stalls. Fast food vendors now spend their money maintaining their drive thru amenities instead of replacing torn up dining room booths – the long-suffering victims of too many sugar-fueled children armed with crayons and plastic kids' meal toys.

With our dashboards doubling as dinner tables, we like to feel secure wherever we are parked. The patio dining experience is much improved by beautiful surroundings – and by being able to read the menu. If you want to attract and retain customers despite the pandemic, you need lighting that makes them feel safe, welcome, and able to enjoy the time they spend at your business. Especially if your business is now conducted mostly outside, since the al fresco lifestyle is less familiar to us than those friendly indoor mall food courts we all miss so dearly.

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Some new trends are emerging as a result of this shift, many of which are right here in our backyard:

- ◆ The Irvine Company is bringing back drive-ins for both movies and improv at The Irvine Spectrum Entertainment Center.
- ◆ The Promenade on Forest in Laguna Beach is a pedestrian-only experience with expanded customer seating and retail areas to allow for adequate social distancing.
- ◆ Glendale Galleria has transformed a parking garage into an outdoor dining area. A parking structure might not be “date night” material, but it's definitely safer than breathing re-circulated air.
- ◆ Retail behemoths like Walmart are also reimagining their outdoor spaces.

SHINING STANDARDS OF SECURITY

Collectively, humans pretty much agree that we feel safer in well-illuminated areas than we do in dark ones. The essence of security lighting is to deter criminal activity and to help us navigate walkways without tripping over our own feet, or the feet of people in front of us, or the people who are supposed to be six feet away from us but can't see well enough to keep their social distance.

A shopping center is only as appealing as its darkest parking lot corner. If your businesses are open when it's dark, you want customers to be drawn towards the light, like moths to particularly lucrative flames.

PRACTICAL AND PRETTY

Aesthetics are the easiest point of discussion here, as we have some examples of our own work to help illustrate. The photos to the right showcase simple accents that can transform trade, dining and entertainment venues at a relatively low cost.

In our opinion, reading glasses can make superb fashion accessories. Wear them with a headlamp, and you get this really sharp "intellectual coal miner" look. Sadly, cranium-mounted flashlights lose some of their couture cred when they shine directly in customers' faces while you're taking their order.

The restaurants we love most are often the worst-lit. A few carefully-placed warm white LEDs can cozy up an atmosphere, add a whimsical charm to a setting, and above all, help customers see what they're doing.

LIGHTS ARE FOR LIVING

If you have ever been on a Virgin America flight, you have firsthand experience in the effect of lighting on your mood. Their claim is that the pink and purple helps passengers calm down upon boarding. Combine that with a silenced cell phone and a cold beer, and you have a one-way ticket to Naperville.

There's plenty evidence for the claim that light affects our moods. With simple, warm accents like tree lights, overhead light swags, or wall-washing building lights, any outdoor space can feel more intimate and relaxed. We could all use a boost to our positivity these days, and modest lighting accents are a great fit for a struggling restaurants and retailers, dimly-lit parking stalls, and sparsely-decorated porches.



A restaurant patio with inadequate lighting at Fashion Island



The patio after we installed overhead swag lighting



A retail walkway in Glendale, CA before enhancement



And after. Stylish and functional!



An empty, unused space at the California Club in downtown LA...



...becomes a stunning bocce ball court and schmoozing ground



Walnut Village in Anaheim, CA needed a little sprucing up



So we shed some light on the subject